

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 217 without my signature.

The author and I share the goal to improve alcohol, drug screening and brief intervention services in the Medi-Cal population. In fact, I proposed to include screening and brief intervention services in my 2008 May Revision. While this proposal was ultimately rejected, I appreciate the author's continued efforts to include this important service in our state's Medicaid program.

Clinical data shows that screening and brief interventions reduce avoidable health problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse, including emergency room utilization as well as reducing substance use-related arrests and traffic violations. Unfortunately, this bill contains several significant problems that prevent its implementation and put the state General Fund at risk.

I would urge the author to work with my Administration to secure a feasible proposal in next year's budget process.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger